

The Power of a Small Plea

“If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed” (Mark 5:28, NIV).

In the kingdom, no individual is small. No one gets lost in the crowd. One person, even one society has labeled worthless or impure, looms large in the Father’s sight. The power of one small, helpless, unspoken plea.

In Mark 5:21–43, tucked into the Gospel, wedged into the story of a high-profile healing, we find the story of a nameless woman who suffered from an undiagnosed illness.

We only have a snapshot of her. She appears on the scene briefly. We know one fact about her: She had been hemorrhaging for 12 years. Because of the ritual impurity her condition entailed, we know that for 12 years, no one had touched her. If a man had brushed up against her, he would have been made unclean because of her impurity.

Imagine the times over the last 12 years that she accidentally defiled a man. Imagine her humiliation and shame as the man scolded her and demeaned her. He would have had to rush home, tear off his defiled clothes and cleanse himself in elaborate ceremony. It was very inconvenient to be touched by this impure one. Surely she had learned to hide herself even in crowds. Surely she had learned to gather her garments in closely, to cover her face, to become invisible.

Before we look at her story, notice how her story is framed. The framing of a picture brings out the details, focuses the eye. Look how her story is framed: It is framed by the story of Jairus.

Jairus, a leader in the synagogue—an important man, a man of influence—burst through the crowd that mobbed Jesus and, tossing aside all pride and dignity, threw himself at Jesus’ feet. No doubt the crowd parted for such an esteemed man as Jairus. “Look! Here comes Jairus! Make a way for Jairus!” they might have said. No doubt they stared as he humbled himself

and begged the Teacher, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live" (Mark 5:23). Jairus was a daddy, and his little daughter was dying.

If you're a daddy and your little daughter is dying, then no price is too high, no sacrifice too great. You'll do anything. You'll forget all your pride and position. You'll ignore every other duty.

The crowd followed as Jesus headed for Jairus' house. They were not a quiet, sedate crowd. They were calling His name and reaching out to grab hold of Him, talking and shouting and clamoring for His attention. As they moved in the direction of Jairus' little daughter, I imagine that the crowd grew as the word went out: "Jairus' little daughter is dying! Rabbi Jesus is going to her! Come along!"

A woman stood on the fringes, watching. Alone. Unclean. Her uncleanness might rub off on anyone she came in contact with, and that person would be forced to go through a time-consuming cleansing ritual to wash away her touch.

She had learned to be careful in public, avoiding brushing up against another person. But a thought kept worming its way into her imagination: "If I could just touch the hem of His garment, I would be made well."

The thought grew stronger until, in a moment of reckless hope, she began to work her way through the crowd. The crowd didn't part for her as it had for Jairus. She prayed not to be noticed, because to be noticed was to be rejected and humiliated.

Suddenly she was close enough to reach out and touch His hem, and she was flooded with His power. Her touch didn't make Him unclean; instead, His touch made her clean. She felt the cleansing, healing power of His touch transform her from death to life. Joy! Celebration!

Then, to her dismay, He stopped dead in His tracks. Brought

the whole crowd to a screeching halt. "Who touched Me?" He demanded. She tried to hide, tried to disappear into the crowd, but He wouldn't stop asking, "Who touched Me?"

The crowd and the disciples were agitated. Why would He stop? He was on His way to do an important job. Didn't He remember Jairus' agonized cry: "Jesus, my little daughter's dying!"

There had been no daddy to part the crowds for the woman with the issue of blood; no daddy to cry out on her behalf; no daddy whose heart was breaking for her pain.

Or was there?

When at last, trembling in fear, she confessed it was she who had touched Him, He looked into her eyes and said, "Daughter!"

Maybe, then, it wasn't just her touch that stopped Jesus in His tracks. Maybe it wasn't just her touch that caught His attention. Maybe it was the voice of her Daddy, whispering, "Jesus, My little daughter's dying."

You'll stop at nothing if you're a daddy and your little daughter's dying.

She had braced herself for the scorn she knew was coming—and found instead that He looked her in the eyes and called her by a new name: "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering" (Mark 5:34).

Jesus was not satisfied just to heal her body. He wanted to heal her soul. When the healing flooded her body, she had what she desired from Him. But He did not have what He desired from her.

He longed to bring her into His presence where He could shower her with love. He wanted to make her whole. He wanted her to know she had a Daddy.

Lost in the Crowd?

Do you ever feel lost in the crowd? Overlooked? Maybe even judged? You might believe that if anyone could see through your carefully crafted disguise—the veil you pull over the real you—he or she would call you unclean. Do you keep your true self hidden behind actions and lifestyle meant to protect you from scrutiny?

A moment of radical obedience. One step.

The Scripture says that we can live unveiled: “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18). We can live out loud and on display because we are reflections of the Lord’s glory. That’s how people see the reality of Christ in the world—through us living authentically and transparently.

Like the woman in Mark’s story, you have been flooded with the presence of Jesus. Your shame has been removed. He can call you front and center in front of the whole crowd and say, “Your faith has made you whole.”

Small Change

Today, be intentionally aware of the Father’s tender mercies and loving kindness toward you. Let yourself enjoy His attention. Revel in the fact that you are not a face in the crowd to Him, but rather you are His dearly loved son or daughter.

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